

## Descriptions of Teacher Competence for Level I Licensure

### Strand A: Instruction (Competencies 1, 2, and 5)

#### **Competency 1. The teacher accurately demonstrates knowledge of the content area and approved curriculum**

Competent Level I teachers use the state standards and the approved curriculum as the basis of instructional planning. In classroom instruction, they communicate content knowledge, learning goals, directions and procedures. In communication and interactions related to content, their spoken language is clear and standard, and written language is legible. They use vocabulary correctly for the content and the age of students. They are able to display content knowledge to students and make connections to other disciplines.

#### **Competency 2. The teacher appropriately utilizes a variety of teaching methods and resources for each area taught.**

Competent Level I teachers choose strategies and resources that are aligned with the standards, curriculum, assessment, and needs of students. During classroom instruction, they provide opportunities for students to work independently, in small groups, and in large groups. They use a variety of methods (such as demonstrations, lectures, student initiated work, group work, questioning, and independent practice). Their instructional strategies draw from a variety of resources, such as field trips, supplemental printed materials, manipulatives, and technology. They provide opportunities for students to apply, practice, and demonstrate knowledge and skills learned through various modalities. To meet individual student needs, they implement necessary modifications and adaptations in instruction and curriculum. Their students with special needs (including English language learners, those who receive special education services, those who are gifted and talented, and those with diverse cultural backgrounds) have access to the general education curriculum, in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities.

#### **Competency 5. The teacher effectively utilizes student assessment techniques and procedures.**

In the classrooms of competent Level I teachers, assessment and instruction are aligned and based on content standards and the developmental levels of students. These teachers have a repertoire of various kinds of assessment tools and strategies (e.g., demonstration, observation, oral, written) that serve both formative and summative purposes. Within their teaching, they use information gained from assessment to adjust lesson plans, activities, and instruction. They maintain varied documentation of student progress, such as student attendance, assignments, varied assessments, and behavior. They use assessment to gauge a lesson's effectiveness and the extent to which students achieve instructional goals. They also encourage students to use assessments to improve their knowledge and skills. In order to foster understanding of assessment use and evaluation procedures, these teachers adhere to the school's required procedures for communicating with parents/caregivers and students about student progress. Their responses to concerns about student progress are consistent and delivered in a timely manner.

## **Strand B: Student Learning (Competencies 3, 4, 6 and 7)**

### **Competency 3. The teacher communicates with and obtains feedback from students in a manner that enhances student learning and understanding.**

Competent Level I teachers explain the relevance of topics and communicate the instructional intent, directions, or plan to their students. They explain the standard for successful achievement so that students can articulate the criteria for successful performance. They are clear with their actions, directions, and explanations. They request comments from and communicate regularly with students about their progress.

### **Competency 4. The teacher comprehends the principles of student growth, development, and learning, and applies them appropriately.**

Competent Level I teachers' questioning skills and discussion techniques are a mix of recitation and higher level thinking appropriate to the age and developmental level of students. They ask some questions that are intended to expand students' understanding of the concepts. Their instruction provides opportunities for students to analyze and synthesize information. They also use various strategies, materials, and resources to meet the needs of individual students.

### **Competency 6. The teacher manages the educational setting in a manner that promotes positive student behavior and a safe and healthy environment.**

Competent Level I teachers serve as models for constructive behavior for their students. They identify, explain, and/or model expected classroom behavior. They enforce expectations and respond to disruptive behavior appropriately. They have established routines and procedures for students to follow during class instruction. They strive to make smooth transitions between activities. On the whole, use of clearly established routines and procedures in the classrooms of competent Level I teachers minimizes distractions and interruptions. In addition, they have materials ready for planned lessons and activities. In spite of their careful planning, however, some instructional time may be lost in materials mismanagement as they experiment with new strategies and grow in understanding and experience in effective management of the educational setting. As a result of continual efforts to apply effective strategies for instructional organization and management, they establish a classroom environment in which students feel safe. Competent Level I teachers pay attention to student health and well being.

### **Competency 7. The teacher recognizes student diversity and creates an atmosphere conducive to the promotion of positive student involvement and self-concept.**

Competent Level I teachers demonstrate sensitivity and responsiveness to the personal ideas, learning needs, interests, and feelings, of students with disabilities and/or from culturally, linguistically, and/or socioeconomically diverse backgrounds. They demonstrate respect for each student's background, experience, learning abilities, language, and culture. They communicate with students about their achievement outcomes, and recognize student achievement can vary from one student to another. They set appropriate expectations for students. They also find effective instructional and assessment strategies to meet individual students' needs and interests and provide opportunities for each student to succeed. Their instructional practice shows progress over time in varying instruction and engaging students in active involvement and creativity. They monitor students' behavior but also make efforts to involve students in decisions about the learning process and classroom climate when opportunities arise.

## Strand C: Professional Learning (Competencies 8 and 9)

### **Competency 8. The teacher demonstrates a willingness to examine and implement change, as appropriate.**

Competent Level I teachers seek out information on methodology, research and current trends in education to enhance and improve the quality of learning. They use this information in building their annual professional development plans. They demonstrate or implement use of a variety of strategies and best practices in their classrooms, resulting in student engagement. As they examine their practice, competent Level I teachers are willing to risk change and refine practice. They recognize that change entails risk, but begin to make changes or modifications as appropriate.

### **Competency 9. The teacher works productively with colleagues, parents, and community members.**

Competent Level I teachers maintain professional communication with colleagues in developing and implementing decisions made at the team or school level. They adhere to school requirements for communicating with parents/caregivers about the instructional program. When conflict arises, competent Level I teachers attempt to use conflict resolution strategies. They are beginning to learn about resources that the parents and the community have to offer.

## Descriptions of Teacher Competence for Level II Licensure

### Strand A: Instruction (Competencies 1, 2, and 5)

#### **Competency 1. The teacher accurately demonstrates knowledge of the content area and approved curriculum**

Competent Level II teachers expand on the state standards and the approved curriculum to make them more relevant for students. During instructional activities, they clearly communicate content knowledge, learning goals, directions, and procedures accurately and in substantive detail. Their vocabulary and written language are clear and at an appropriate level. They recognize when students are confused about directions or performance criteria, and they clarify their communication accordingly. On the whole, competent Level II teachers' representations of content are suitable for their students' learning needs and provide students with connections to their prior knowledge and experiences. These teachers display solid content knowledge and finds ways to integrate other disciplines into the curriculum when appropriate.

#### **Competency 2. The teacher appropriately utilizes a variety of teaching methods and resources for each area taught.**

Competent Level II teachers' choices of strategies and resources are aligned with the standards, curriculum, assessment, and diverse needs of students and result in coherent instructional design. These teachers use large group, small group, and independent student learning experiences and a variety of teaching methods (such as demonstrations, lectures, student initiated work, group work, question, and independent practice) that are suitable to students' needs and instructional goals. In order to support student progress towards varied goals, they consistently select and put to use relevant and suitable curricular resources. They provide opportunities for

students to apply, practice, and demonstrate knowledge in the learning styles and modalities that best fit them. They also design and implement necessary modifications and adaptations in instruction and curriculum. On the whole, competent Level II teachers routinely adapt strategies and select particular resources to meet the needs of individual students. Students with special needs (including English language learners, those who receive special education services, those who are gifted and talented, and those with diverse cultural backgrounds) have access to the general education curriculum, in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities.

**Competency 5. The teacher effectively utilizes student assessment techniques and procedures.**

In the classrooms of competent Level II teachers, assessment and instruction are aligned and based on content standards and the developmental levels of students. During instruction, these teachers provide multiple ways (such as demonstration, observation, oral, written) for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. In the main, competent Level II teachers use assessment data to improve future learning for individuals and groups. They use both formative and summative assessment data to gauge a lesson's effectiveness and the extent to which students achieve instructional goals. Their students clearly understand the teachers' systems for documenting information on student attendance, assignments, assessment, behavior, and achievement. In order to foster understanding of assessment use and evaluation procedures, teachers communicate with parents/caregivers and students about students' progress on a regular, timely and consistent basis. These teachers respond appropriately to concerns about progress expressed by students and parents/caregivers.

**Strand B: Student Learning (Competencies 3, 4, 6 and 7)**

**Competency 3. The teacher communicates with and obtains feedback from students in a manner that enhances student learning and understanding.**

Competent Level II teachers explain the relevance of topics to their students and communicate the instructional intent, directions, or plan. They expect and explain clearly a high standard for successful achievement. During instruction, they are clear in their actions, directions, and explanations and checks for understanding. They use a variety of approaches, including peer and student assessment, to ensure clarity about their actions, directions, and explanations to further student understanding and learning. In order to reinforce what they are teaching, competent Level II teachers communicate regularly with students about their progress and offer suggestions to improve students' understanding and learning.

**Competency 4. The teacher comprehends the principles of student growth, development, and learning, and applies them appropriately.**

Competent Level II teachers consistently integrate age and developmentally appropriate higher level thinking skills into instruction to deepen understanding of content and to develop student skills in problem solving, inquiry and decision-making. Their questioning skills and discussion techniques are predominantly based on multiple levels of thinking. They regularly ask questions that are intended to expand students' understanding of the concepts. They provide frequent opportunities for students to analyze and synthesize information. Additionally, they adapt strategies and select particular materials, and resources to meet the needs of individual students.

**Competency 6. The teacher manages the educational setting in a manner that promotes positive student behavior and a safe and healthy environment.**

Competent Level II teachers identify, explain, and model constructive behavior patterns. They establish and reinforce expectations for student behaviors that promote citizenship in a classroom community. They monitor student behaviors and redirect them. They consistently enforce expectations and respond appropriately to disruptive behavior. They establish routines and procedures so that little instructional time is lost. Throughout instructional activities, transitions occur smoothly, and momentum is maintained during transitions, distractions, and interruptions. To ensure these smooth transitions, competent Level II teachers consistently prepare and arrange materials in advance of instruction for easy student and teacher accessibility. Instructional time remains focused on instruction during materials distribution and use. These teachers consistently provide a safe classroom environment for learning. They regularly attend to the health and well-being of students.

**Competency 7. The teacher recognizes student diversity and creates an atmosphere conducive to the promotion of positive student involvement and self-concept.**

Competent Level II teachers acknowledge and validate the ideas, learning needs, interests, and feelings of students with disabilities and/or from culturally, linguistically, and/or socio-economically diverse backgrounds. They respect different student backgrounds, experiences, learning abilities, languages and cultures and consider these factors when planning and implementing lessons. They understand how students differ in their approaches to learning and adjust instruction accordingly. They challenge students with high expectations and design opportunities for each student to succeed based on individual learning needs. What's more, they provide students with the support they need to achieve at high levels. On the whole, competent Level II teachers create an inclusive, caring environment in which each individual is respected and valued, and they work to help develop students' self-esteem, motivation, and sense of civic responsibility.

**Strand C: Professional Learning (Competencies 8 and 9)**

**Competency 8. The teacher demonstrates a willingness to examine and implement change, as appropriate.**

Competent Level II teachers consistently seek out information on methodology, research and current trends in education to enhance and improve the quality of learning. They build their professional development plan on this information. While applying what they are learning to their practice, they consistently demonstrate and implement a variety of strategies and best practices to motivate and/or engage students in learning. They regularly take action to promote instructional improvement by supporting and incorporating change initiatives.

**Competency 9. The teacher works productively with colleagues, parents, and community members.**

Competent Level II teachers cooperate with colleagues in developing and implementing decisions made at the team or school level. They systematically communicate with parents/caregivers about the instructional program. When conflict arises, they use conflict resolution strategies. They also use community and parent resources in the development of the instructional program.

## Descriptions of Teacher Competence for Level III Licensure

### Strand A: Instruction (Competencies 1, 2, and 5)

#### **Competency 1. The teacher accurately demonstrates knowledge of the content area and approved curriculum**

Competent Level III teachers actively build on the state standards and approved curriculum by providing instruction based on students' prior knowledge and experiences and by anticipating possible student misunderstanding. Directions and procedures are clear. Learning goals are explicit. These teachers' written and spoken vocabulary enriches the lesson. In delivering the curriculum, competent Level III teachers not only display extensive content knowledge and make connections to other disciplines, but they also convey explicit connections to previous lessons and/or other subjects.

#### **Competency 2. The teacher appropriately utilizes a variety of teaching methods and resources for each area taught.**

Competent Level III teachers choose strategies and resources that are aligned with the standards, curriculum, assessment, and diverse needs of students and result in an engaging, coherent instructional design. These teachers engage students in large group, small group, and independent work activities appropriate for instructional expectations. When students engage in small group activities, they demonstrate understanding of group dynamics that are appropriate for the age and developmental level of students (e.g., students on task, a high level of student participation, equal distribution of labor, individual accountability). In this educational setting, student collaboration leads to an exchange of ideas that achieves learning goals. In overall classroom instruction, competent Level III teachers demonstrate effective selection and use of a variety of methods that are relevant to students and instructional goals. Resources are also consistently relevant for student learning of instructional goals. Students are given opportunities to choose, adapt, or create resources to enhance their learning. The Level III teachers provide opportunities for students to apply, practice, and demonstrate new learning in the varied styles, modalities, and intelligences that best suit them. These teachers participate and collaborate with colleagues and parents to design and implement necessary modifications and adaptations in instruction and curriculum. They seamlessly integrate strategies, materials, and resources to accommodate diverse student needs. In their classrooms, students with special needs (including English language learners, those who receive special education services, those who are gifted and talented, and those with diverse cultural backgrounds) have access to the general education curriculum, in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities.

#### **Competency 5. The teacher effectively utilizes student assessment techniques and procedures.**

In the classrooms of competent Level III teachers, assessment and instruction are seamless. These teachers continually assess student learning formally and informally from multiple sources and use data as the basis of future instructional planning for individuals and groups. Students are aware of how they are meeting standards and instructional goals. Their teachers use assessment results to adjust daily activities and instruction to meet the needs of students. Competent Level III teachers' system for documenting information on student learning includes state standards achievement and the results of state testing when appropriate. The system is up-to-date and easily understood by students, parents/caregivers, administrators, and other school personnel. There is evidence that students are able to maintain and track their individual progress. These teachers initiate communication with families/caregivers and students on a frequent basis on both positive and negative aspects of student progress. Students and families/caregivers are comfortable in approaching the teacher with concerns.

## **Strand B: Student Learning (Competencies 3, 4, 6 and 7)**

### **Competency 3. The teacher communicates with and obtains feedback from students in a manner that enhances student learning and understanding.**

Competent Level III teachers engage students in explanation and/or demonstration of the relevance of topics and activities and involve them in establishing instructional direction and plan. In their classrooms, students understand and can articulate the standard for successful achievement. In order to promote student learning, these teachers use a variety of approaches, including peer and student assessment, to make their actions, directions and explanation clear to students. Students offer further examples to enhance understanding and learning. On the whole, competent Level III teachers consistently engage students in the analysis and evaluation of their learning. They have a system to communicate with students on their progress. They actively work with their students to enhance learning beyond the classroom.

### **Competency 4. The teacher comprehends the principles of student growth, development and learning, and applies them appropriately.**

The questioning skills and discussion techniques of competent Level III teachers are intended to expand students' learning of the concepts presented in their class. These teachers provide many opportunities during instruction for students to analyze, synthesize and evaluate information. They encourage students to formulate questions and initiate discussions. They seamlessly integrate strategies, materials, and resources to accommodate diverse student needs. Students are given opportunities to choose, adapt, or create resources to enhance their learning.

### **Competency 6. The teacher manages the educational setting in a manner that promotes positive student behavior and a safe and healthy environment.**

Competent Level III teachers engage students in establishing expectations for creating a learning environment. They encourage students to develop a classroom management system that teaches each student accountability for self and others and acceptable, appropriate behaviors in learning situations. These teachers integrate the teaching of constructive, pro-social behaviors into regular classroom activities. Students demonstrate active and appropriate participation. In order to promote this participation, competent Level III teachers establish a system in which students assume some responsibility for routine tasks. Transitions are seamless, and distractions and interruptions do not interfere with learning. In addition, these teachers systematically prepare and arrange materials in advance of instruction to ensure easy access for both students and teachers. Over all, they provide multiple opportunities within instruction to address the health and well-being of students.

### **Competency 7. The teacher recognizes student diversity and creates an atmosphere conducive to the promotion of positive student involvement and self-concept.**

Competent Level III teachers adjust practice based on observation and knowledge of students with disabilities and/or from culturally, linguistically, and/or socio-economically diverse groups. They treat all students equitably, recognizing and planning for individual differences in cultures, languages, learning abilities, backgrounds, and experiences. They create an environment in which students recognize their own backgrounds and abilities, while also recognizing the differences and similarities they have with their teacher and classmates. While engaged in teaching, they use their knowledge of the influences of context, disability, language, and culture, and socio-economic status to engage students at the personal level. They individualize instruction and assessment based on students' strengths and needs. They regularly challenge students to strive for the next level of achievement in a given area. The teachers, other students, and other appropriate resources support students in the learning process. In the classrooms of these Level III teachers, students perceive and acknowledge their learning success on a regular basis. These teachers support students in recognizing areas of strength and needs in themselves and guide students to take responsibility for augmenting both areas.

## **Strand C: Professional Learning (Competencies 8 and 9)**

### **Competency 8. The teacher demonstrates a willingness to examine and implement change as appropriate.**

Competent Level III teachers demonstrate the ability to reason, take multiple perspectives, be creative, and take reasoned risks to improve teaching. They share information with colleagues. They build their professional development plans from an analysis of their growth areas. These teachers initiate and implement a variety of strategies and best practices to engage students consistently and fully, including opportunities for student participation in selecting, adapting and creating strategies best suited to their learning styles. They assume a leadership role in discourse about change, taking implementation risks and serving as a model for such change.

### **Competency 9. The teacher works productively with colleagues, parents, and community members.**

Competent Level III teachers collaborate with colleagues in developing and implementing decisions made at the team or school level. They initiate and lead other teachers in discourse about professional issues, using varied approaches including conflict resolution strategies when appropriate, and may assume a leadership role at the team, school, or district level. They also collaborate with parents and community in developing or implementing the instructional program, when this collaboration will enhance or expand student learning.